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All the articles in this issue, except the Information Letter, are extracts from the writings and talks of SRI AUROBINDO and THE MOTHER. Most of the Mother's words are translations from the original French. Titles to these extracts are given by the editor.

The House of the Divine

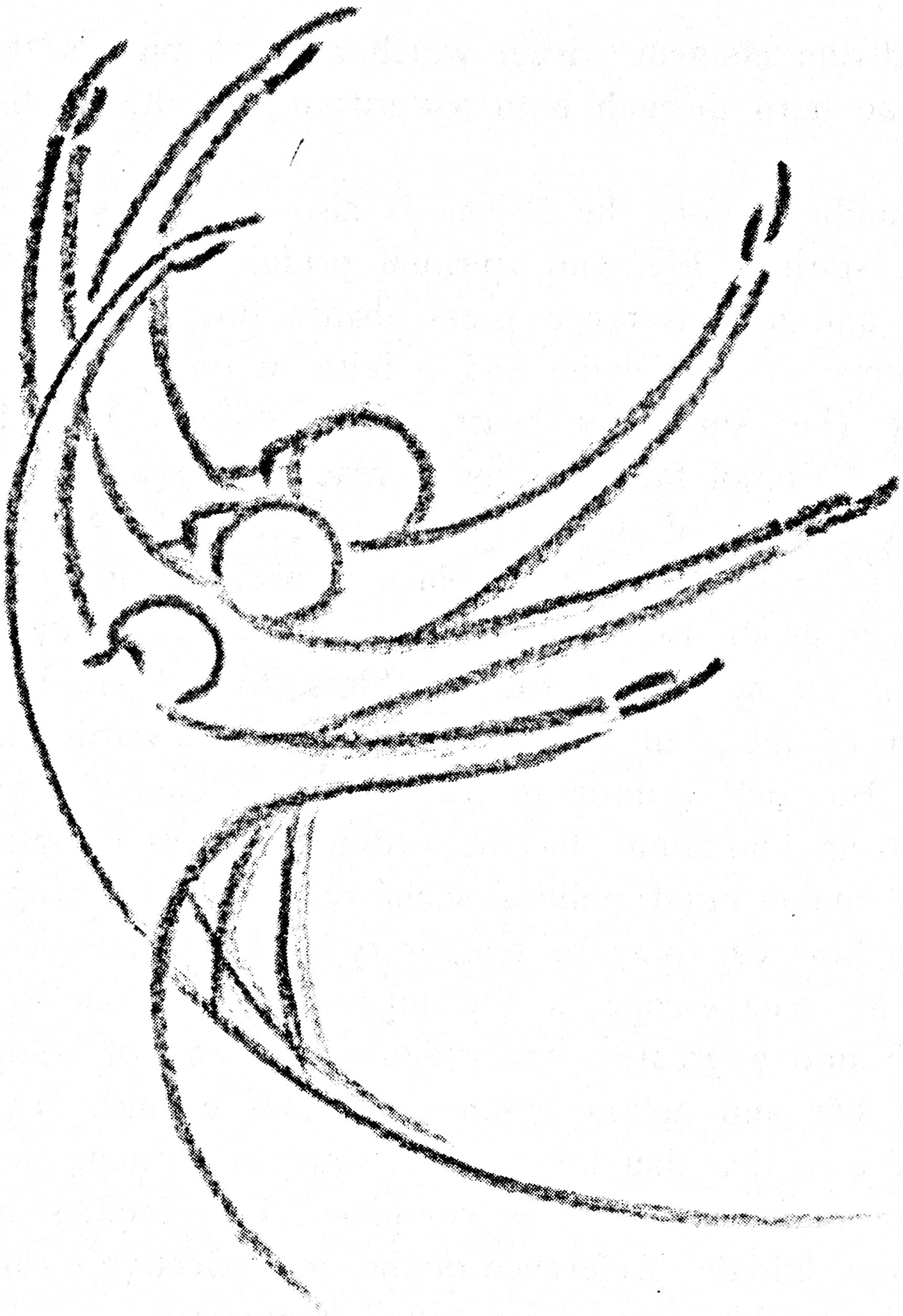
It goes without saying that the qualities you speak of are helpful in the approach to the spiritual path, while the defects you enumerate are each a serious stumbling-block in the way. Sincerity especially is indispensable to the spiritual endeavour, and crookedness a constant obstacle. The sattwic nature has always been held to be the most apt and ready for the spiritual life, while the rajasic nature is encumbered by its desires and passions. At the same time, spirituality is something above the dualities, and what is most needed for it is a true upward aspiration. This may come to the rajasic man as well as to the sattwic. If it does, he can rise by it above his failings and desires and passions, just as the other can rise beyond his virtues, to the Divine Purity and Light and Love. Necessarily, this can only happen if he conquers his lower nature and throws it from him; for if he relapses into it, he is likely to fall from the path or at least to be, so long as the relapse lasts, held back by it from inner progress. But for all that the conversion of great sinners into great saints, of men of little or no virtue into spiritual seekers and God-lovers has frequently happened in religious and spiritual history — as in Europe St. Augustine, in India Chaitanya's Jagai and Madhai, Bilwamangal and many others. The house of the Divine is not closed to any who knocks sincerely at its gates, whatever their past stumbles and errors. Human virtues and human errors are bright and dark wrappings

of a divine element within which once it pierces the veil, can burn through both towards the heights of the spirit.

Humility before the Divine is also a *sine qua non* of the spiritual life, and spiritual pride, arrogance, or vanity and self-assurance press always downward. But confidence in the Divine and a faith in one's spiritual destiny (i.e. since my heart and soul seek for the Divine, I cannot fail one day to reach Him) are much needed in view of the difficulties of the Path. A contempt for others is out of place, especially since the Divine is in all. Evidently, the activities and aspirations of men are not trivial and worthless, for all life is a growth of the soul out of the darkness towards the Light. But our attitude is that humanity cannot grow out of its limitations by the ordinary means adopted by the human mind, politics, social reform, philanthropy, etc. — these can only be temporary or local palliatives. The only true escape is a change of consciousness, a change into a greater, wider and purer way of being, and a life and action based upon that change. It is therefore to that that the energies must be turned, once the spiritual orientation is complete. This implies no contempt, but the preference of the only effective means over those which have been found ineffective.

SRI AUROBINDO

(*Letters on Yoga*, Cent. ed. vol. 23, pp. 552-53)



LIFE

Mystic Miracle, daughter of Delight,
Life, thou ecstasy,
Let the radius of thy flight
Be eternity.

On thy wings thou bearest high
Glory and disdain,
Godhead and mortality,
Ecstasy and pain.

Take me in thy wild embrace
Without weak reserve
Body dire and unveiled face;
Faint not, Life, nor swerve.

All thy bliss I would explore,
All thy tyranny.
Cruel like the lion's roar,
Sweet like springtide be.

Like a Titan I would take,
Like a God enjoy,
Like a man contend and make,
Revel like a boy.

More I will not ask of thee,
Nor my fate would choose;
King or conquered let me be,
Live or lose.

Even in rags I am a god;
Fallen, I am divine;
High I triumph when down-trod,
Long I live when slain.

SRI AUROBINDO

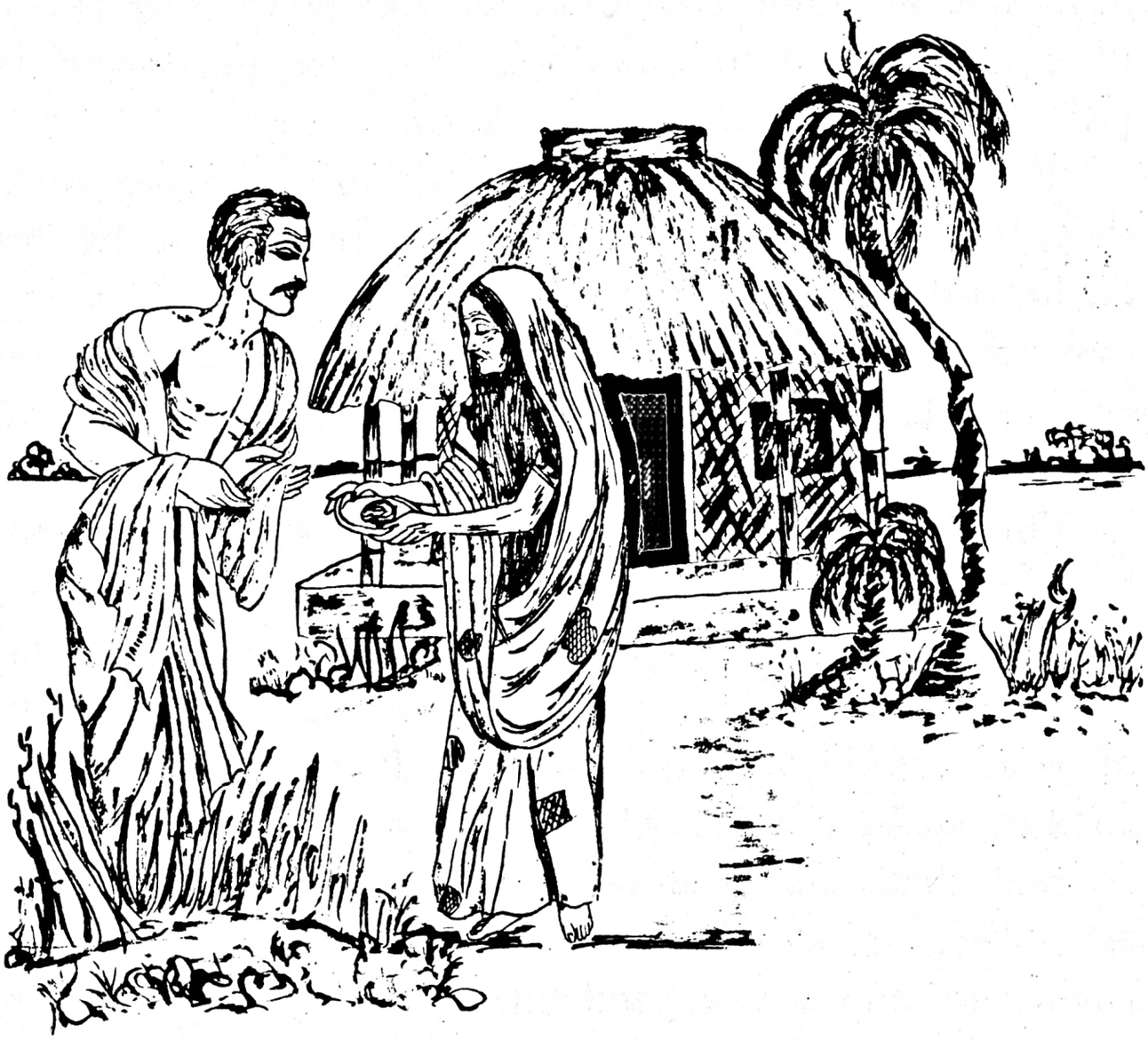
(*Collected Poems*, Cent. ed. vol. 5, p. 95)

Story of a Perfect Gift

I remember having read, in a book narrating the legends of India, a story like this. There was a very poor, very old woman who had nothing, who was quite miserable, who lived in a little miserable hut, and who had been given a fruit. It was a mango. She had eaten half of it and kept the other half for the next day, because it was sometihng so marvellous that she did not often happen to get it — a mango. And then, when night fell, someone knocked at the tottering door and asked for hospitality. And this someone came in and told her he wanted shelter and was hungry. So she said to him: "Good. I have no fire to warm you, I have no blanket to cover you, and there is the half of this mango remaining with me, that is all I have, if you like it; I have eaten half of it." And it turns out that this someone was Shiva, and that she was filled with an inner glory, for she had made a perfect gift of herself and of all she had.

I had read that, I found it magnificent. Well, yes, it is very descriptive, it is that. It is the very thing.

The rich man, or even people who are quite well-off and have all sorts of things in life and give to the Divine what they have in surplus — for generally this is the gesture: one has a little more money than one needs, one has a few more things than one needs, and so, generously, one gives that to the Divine. It is better than giving nothing. But even if this "little more" than what they need represents lakhs of rupees, the gift is



less perfect than that of half the mango. For it is not by the quantity or the quality that it is measured: it is by the sincerity of the giving and the absoluteness of the giving.

> *But if rich men in ordinary life want to give their riches to the Divine, and the Divine is not before them, then to whom are they to give? They do not know where to put their money!*

Yes, but then the question does not come up. If they have not met the Divine either within or without, it does not come into question. They are not asked to give to someone they do not know.

If they have met the Divine within themselves, well, they have only to follow the indication given by the Divine for the use of what they have; and if they follow quite sincerely and exactly the indications they receive, that is all that can be asked of them. But till that moment nothing is asked of anyone.

One begins to ask only when someone says: "Here I am, I want to consecrate myself to the Divine." Then it is all right, from that moment one asks; but not before. Before that, even if in passing you pull out of your pocket a paisa and put it there, it is very good; you have done what you thought you ought to do and that's all; you are not asked for anything at all. There is a great difference between asking the Divine to adopt you, and then making a gesture of good will, but without the least intention of changing anything whatever in the course of your life.

Those who live the ordinary life, well, if they make a gesture of good will, it is so much the better for them, this creates for them antecedents for coming lives. But it is only from the moment one says: "There, now I know that there is but one thing which counts for me, it is the divine life, and I want to live the divine life", — starting from that moment one asks, not before.

Mother, there are people who come here, who

have money and are very devoted, who show their devotion, but when the question of money comes up, they bargain....

...They come with the idea of taking from the Divine all they can: all the qualities, all the capacities, all the conveniences also, all the comforts, everything, and sometimes even powers, and all the rest. They come to take, they do not come to give. And their appearance of devotion is simply a cloak they have put over their will to take, to receive. That covers a large field: from saving one's soul, having spiritual experiences, obtaining powers; and it finishes with a small quiet life, comfortable (more or less, at least with a minimum of comfort) and without cares, without botheration, far from the turmoil of life. But if they give, it is a sort of bargaining; they know that in order to take all that, it would be well to give a little something, otherwise they will not receive it, so they make a show of being very devoted. But it is only a semblance, for it is not sincere.

The unfortunate thing for them is that it deceives no one. It may be tolerated; but that does not mean that one is deceived.

The bargaining is everywhere, in all the parts of the being. It is always give and take, from the highest spiritual experiences to the tiniest little material needs. There is not one in a million who gives without bargaining.

And the beauty of the story I spoke to you about (moreover there are many others like that here) is just

this, that when the old woman gave, she did not know that it was Shiva. She gave to the passing beggar, for the joy of doing good, of giving, not because he was a god and she hoped in exchange to have salvation or some knowledge.

> *But when one has understood that now there ought no longer to be desire but an absolute giving, still that does not become a giving; and this continues indefinitely. Why?... What one must do, what should be done?*

...What should be done?... Be sincere.

It is that; always, always, the little worm in the fruit. One tells oneself, "Oh! I can't." It is not true, if one wanted, one could.

And there are people who tell me, "I don't have the will-power." That means that you are not sincere. For sincerity is an infinitely more powerful force than all the wills in the world. It can change anything whatsoever in the twinkling of an eye: it takes up, holds it, pulls it out — and then it's over.

But one closes one's eyes, gives oneself excuses.

> *The problem recurs all the time.*

It comes back because you don't pull it out completely. What you do is, you cut the branch, so it grows again.

11. 1. 1956 THE MOTHER

(*Questions and Answers 1956*, pp. 14-17)

Need of the Hour

*The yoga we practise is not for ourselves alone, but for the Divine; its aim is to work out the will of the Divine in the world, to effect a spiritual transformation and to bring down a divine nature and a divine life into the mental, vital and physical nature and life of humanity. Its object is not personal Mukti, although Mukti is a necessary condition of the yoga, but the liberation and transformation of the human being. It is not personal Ananda, but the bringing down of the divine Ananda — Christ's kingdom of heaven, our Satya-yuga — upon the earth. Of *mokṣa* we have no personal need; for the soul is *nityamukta* and bondage is an illusion. We play at being bound, we are not really bound. We can be free when God wills; for he, our supreme Self, is the master of the game, and without his grace and permission no soul can leave the game. It is often God's will in us to take through the mind the *bhoga* of ignorance, of the dualities, of joy and grief, of pleasure and pain, of virtue and sin, of enjoyment and renunciation: for long ages, in many countries, he never even thinks of the yoga but plays out this play century after century without wearying of it. There is nothing evil in this, nothing which we need çondemn or from which we need shrink, — it is God's play. The wise man is he who recognises this truth and knowing his freedom, yet plays out God's play,

** This writing belongs to Sri Aurobindo's early Pondicherry period.*

waiting for his command to change the methods of the game.

The command is now. God always keeps for himself a chosen country in which the higher knowledge is through all chances and dangers, by the few or the many, continually preserved, and for the present, in this Chaturyuga at least, that country is India. Whenever he chooses to take the full pleasure of ignorance, of the dualities, of strife and wrath and tears and weakness and selfishness, the tamasic and rajasic pleasures, of the play of the Kali in short, he dims the knowledge in India and puts her down into weakness and degradation so that she may retire into herself and not interfere with this movement of his Lila. When he wants to rise up from the mud and Narayana in man to become once again mighty and wise and blissful, then he once more pours out the knowledge on India and raises her up so that she may give the knowledge with its necessary consequences of might, wisdom and bliss to the whole world. When there is the contracted movement of knowledge, the yogins in India withdraw from the world and practise yoga for their own liberation and delight or for the liberation of a few disciples; but when the movement of knowledge again expands and the soul of India expands with it, they come forth once more and work in the world and for the world. Yogins like Janaka, Ajatashatru and Kartavirya once more sit on the thrones of the world and govern the nations.

God's Lila in man moves always in a circle, from Satyayuga to Kali and through Kali to the Satya, from

the Age of Gold to the Age of Iron and back again through the Iron to the Gold. In modern language the Satyayuga is a period of the world in which a harmony, stable and sufficient, is created and man realises for a time, under certain conditions and limitations, the perfection of his being. The harmony exists in his nature, by the force of a settled purity; but afterwards it begins to break down and man upholds it, in the Treta, by force of will, individual and collective; it breaks down further and he attempts to uphold it in the Dwapara by intellectual regulation and common consent and rule; then in the Kali it finally collapses and is destroyed. But the Kali is not merely evil; in it the necessary conditions are progressively built up for a new Satya, another harmony, a more advanced perfection. In the period of the Kali which has passed, still endures in its effects, but is now at an end, there has been a general destruction of the ancient knowledge and culture. Only a few fragments remain to us in the Vedas, Upanishads and other sacred works and in the world's confused traditions. But the time is at hand for a first movement upward, the first attempt to build up a new harmony and perfection. That is the reason why so many ideas are abroad for the perfection of human society, knowledge, religion and morals. But the true harmony has not yet been found.

It is only India that can discover the harmony, because it is only by a change — not a mere re-adjustment — of man's present nature that it can be developed, and such a change is not possible except by yoga. The nature of man and of things is at present

a discord, a harmony that has got out of tune. The whole heart and action and mind of man must be changed, but from within, not from without, not by political and social institutions, not even by creeds and philosophies, but by realisation of God in ourselves and the world and a remoulding of life by that realisation. This can only be affected by Purnayoga, a yoga not devoted to a particular purpose, even though that purpose be Mukti or Ananda, but to the fulfilment of the divine humanity in ourselves and others.

SRI AUROBINDO

(*The Supramental Manifestation*, Cent. ed. vol. 16, pp. 411-13)

GLOSSARY

mukti (Mukti)	spiritual liberation.
ānanḍa (Ananda)	spiritual delight, the bliss of the spirit.
Satyayuga (Satyayuga)	the Age of Truth.
mokṣa (Moksha)	liberation from Maya.
nityamukta	eternally free.
bhoga	enjoyment.
Caturyuga (Chaturyuga)	the Four Ages.
tamas	the quality that hides or darkens, inertia.
rajas	the quality that drives to action, energy.
kāli (Kali)	the Universal Mother, the Divine Shakti.
līlā (Lila)	play, creation as the play of God.
Tretāyuga (Tretayuga)	the Age in which three parts belong to the Truth and one to untruth.
Dvāparayuga (Dwapara yuga)	the Age in which Truth and untruth are equal.
Kaliyuga (Kaliyuga)	the Age of Ignorance.
pūrṇayoga (Purnayoga)	the integral Yoga.

Birthday Messages to a Sadhak*

9. 9. 1941

Put stress always on the aspiration within; let that get depth and steadiness in the heart; the outer obstacles of mind and the vital will recede of themselves with the growth of the heart's love and aspiration.

9. 9. 1942

Keep the mind and heart open and turned inward and upward so that when the touch comes from within or the flow from above, you may be ready to receive it.

9. 9. 1943

To persevere in turning towards the Light is what is most demanded. The Light is nearer to us than we think and at any time its hour may come.

SRI AUROBINDO

(*On Himself*, Cent. ed. vol. 26, p. 216)

** The messages given on September 9, 1936 to 1940 were published in our September 1975 issue.*

Do Gods of Purānas Exist?

Q: Do the gods of the Puranas and the gods of Greek and Egyptian Mythology have any real existence?

Between the gods of the Puranas and the gods of Grecian and Egyptian mythology, all kinds of similarities are found; it could be an interesting subject for study. To the modern Western world, all these divinities — the Greek gods and other "pagan" gods, as they call them — are simply a product of human imagination and correspond to nothing real in the universe; but this is a gross error.

To understand the mechanism of the universal life, even that of the terrestrial life, one has indeed to know that all these are real and living beings, each one in his own realm, and have an independent reality. They would exist even if men did not exist. The majority of these gods existed before men existed.

In a very old tradition, antecedent probably to the Chaldean and Vedic traditions which are its two branches, the history of creation is narrated not from the metaphysical or psychological point of view, but from an objective point of view, and this history is as real as our story of historical epochs. Of course, it is not the only way of looking at the thing, but it is quite as legitimate as any other; in any case it recognises the concrete reality of these divine beings.

They are beings who belong to the progressive cre-

ation of the universe and have themselves presided over its formation, from the most ethereal or subtle to the most material regions; it is a descent of the divine creative Spirit. And they descended progressively, through realities more and more — one cannot say dense, because it is not dense, one cannot say even material for matter as we know does not exist on those planes — through realities more and more concrete.

According to traditions and occult schools, all these zones of realities, these planes of realities have got different names; they are classified in a different way, but there is an essential analogy, and if you go back sufficiently far into the traditions, you see only the names changing according to the country and the language. Even now, the experiences of Western occultists and those of Eastern occultists offer great similarities. All who set out on the discovery of these invisible worlds and make a report of what they saw give a very simi-

lar description; whether they be of here or there: they use different words, but the experience is very much alike and the handling of the forces is the same.

This knowledge of the occult worlds is based on the existence of subtle bodies and of subtle worlds corresponding to those bodies; they are what the psychological method calls "states of consciousness", but these states of consciousness really correspond to worlds. The occult procedure thus consists in being aware of these various inner states of being or subtle bodies and in being sufficiently master of them so as to be able to disclose them successively one after another. There is indeed a whole scale of increasing or decreasing subtlety, according to the direction in which you go; and the occult procedure consists in bringing out of a denser body, a subtler body and so on up to the most ethereal regions. You move on by successive exteriorisations into bodies or worlds more and more subtle. It is somewhat as if every time you passed into another dimension. The fourth dimension of the physicists is nothing else but a mere scientific transcription of an occult knowledge. To give another image, one can say that the physical body is in the centre — it is the most material, the densest and also the smallest — and the more subtle inner bodies overflow more and more the central physical body; they pass through, stretching themselves farther and farther, like water evaporating from a porous vase and forming a kind of steam all around. And the greater the subtlety, the larger the extension, tending to attain to that of the universe; one ends by universalising oneself. And it is

a quite concrete process, that gives an objective experience of invisible worlds, enabling one even to act in these worlds.

There is therefore a very small number of people in the West who know that these gods are not merely subjective and imaginary — more or less wildly imaginary — but they correspond to an universal truth.

All these regions, all these domains are filled with beings who exist, each in his domain, and if you are awake and conscious in a particular plane — for instance, if on coming out of a more material body you awake on some higher plane, you have the same relation with the things and people of that plane as you have with the things and people of the material world; that is to say there exists a thoroughly objective relation that has nothing to do with the idea you may have of these things. Naturally, the resemblance is greater and greater as you approach the physical, the material world; even there comes a time when one region has a direct action upon another. In any case, in what Sri Aurobindo calls overmental worlds, you will find a concrete reality, absolutely independent of your personal experience. ... ...

One must have at least a little of this experience in order to understand these things. Otherwise, those who are convinced that all this is mere human imagination and mental formations, who believe that these gods have such and such form, because men have thought them to be like that and that they have these defects and these qualities because men have thought them like that — all people who say that God is made

in the image of man and that he exists only in human thought, — all these will not understand, to them it will appear absolutely ridiculous, madness. One must have lived a little, touched a little the subject to know how much concrete the thing is. ... ...

Now to come back to the gods and conclude, it must be said that all beings who have never had an earthly existence — gods or demons, invisible beings and powers — do not possess what the Divine has put into man: the psychic being. And this psychic being gives man true love, charity, compassion, a deep kindness which compensate for all his external defects.

In the gods there is no fault, because they live according to their own nature, spontaneously and without restraint: it is their way of godhood. But if you stand on a higher point of view, if you have a higher vision, a vision of the whole, you see them lacking certain qualities that are exclusively human. By his capacity of love and self-giving, man can have as much power as the gods and even more, when he is not egoistic, when he has surmounted his selfishness.

If he fulfils the required condition, man is nearer the Supreme than the gods; he can be nearer. He is not that automatically, but he has the power to be so, the potentiality.

If human love manifested without mixture, it would become all-powerful. Unfortunately, there is in human love as much love of oneself as of the one loved, it is not a love that makes you forget yourself.

THE MOTHER

(*Bulletin*, August 1959, pp. 85-95)

Love is not sexual intercourse

Love is not vital attraction and interchange.

Love is not the hearts hunger for affection.

Love is a mighty vibration coming straight from the One, and only the very pure and very strong are capable of receiving and manifesting it.

To be pure is to be open only to the Supreme's influence and to no other.

ENTHUSIASM IN ACTION

All actions are done with energy and ardour.

(Botanical name: *Petunia hybrida*, all bicoloured flowers)

The Religion of Humanity

LIBERTY, EQUALITY AND FRATERNITY

The aim of the religion of humanity was formulated in the eighteenth century by a sort of primal intuition; that aim was and it is still to re-create human society in the image of three kindred ideas, liberty, equality and fraternity. None of these has really been won in spite of all the progress that has been achieved. The liberty that has been so loudly proclaimed as an essential of modern progress is an outward and mechanical and unreal liberty. The equality that has been so much sought after and battled for is equally an outward and mechanical and will turn out to be an unreal equality. Fraternity is not even claimed to be a practicable principle of the ordering of life and what is put forward as its substitute is the outward and mechanical principle of equal association or at the best a comradeship of labour. This is because the idea of humanity has been obliged in an intellectual age to mask its true character of a religion and a thing of the soul and the spirit and to appeal to the vital and physical mind of man rather than his inner being. It has limited his effort to the attempt to revolutionise political and social institutions and to bring about such a modification of the ideas and sentiments of the common mind of mankind as would make these institutions practicable; it has worked at the machinery of human life and on the outer mind much more than upon the soul of the

race. It has laboured to establish a political, social and legal liberty, equality and mutual help in an equal association.

But though these aims are of great importance in their own field, they are not the central thing; they can only be secure when founded upon a change of the inner human nature and inner way of living; they are themselves of importance only as means for giving a greater scope and a better field for man's development towards that change and, when it is once achieved, as an outward expression of the larger inward life. Freedom, equality, brotherhood are three godheads of the soul; they cannot be really achieved through the external machinery of society or by man so long as he lives only in the individual and the communal ego. When the ego claims liberty, it arrives at competitive individualism. When it asserts equality, it arrives first at strife, then at an attempt to ignore the variations of Nature, and, as the sole way of doing that successfully, it constructs an artificial and machine-made society. A society that pursues liberty as its ideal is unable to achieve equality; a society that aims at equality will be obliged to sacrifice liberty. For the ego to speak of fraternity is for it to speak of something contrary to its nature. All that it knows is association for the pursuit of common egoistic ends and the utmost that it can arrive at is a closer organisation for the equal distribution of labour, production, consumption and enjoyment.

Yet is brotherhood the real key to the triple gospel of the idea of humanity. The union of liberty and

equality can only be achieved by the power of human brotherhood and it cannot be founded on anything else. But brotherhood exists only in the soul and by the soul; it can exist by nothing else. For this brotherhood is not a matter either of physical kinship or of vital association or of intellectual agreement. When the soul claims freedom, it is the freedom of its self-development, the self-development of the divine in man in all his being. When it claims equality, what it is claiming is that freedom equally for all and the recognition of the same soul, the same godhead in all human beings. When it strives for brotherhood, it is founding that equal freedom of self-development on a common aim, a common life, a unity of mind and feeling founded upon the recognition of this inner spiritual unity. These three things are in fact the nature of the soul; for freedom, equality, unity are the eternal attributes of the Spirit. It is the practical recognition of this truth, it is the awakening of the soul in man and the attempt to get him to live from his soul and not from his ego which is the inner meaning of religion, and it is that to which the religion of humanity also must arrive before it can fulfil itself in the life of the race.

SRI AUROBINDO

(*Social & Political Thought*, Cent. ed. vol. 15, pp. 545-47)